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The Shape of Things

THE OPENING SCENES OF WAR IN WESTERN Europe resembled a slow-motion film. France and England were at war with Germany, but at press time (noon Tuesday) the crucial question of Allied strategy was still unanswered. Would the French undertake a large-scale offensive against the Siegfried line, hoping to relieve pressure on Poland and risking terrible losses to achieve quick penetration? Only preliminary movements have been reported so far. Would they launch an air offensive against Germany before Hitler makes a move in the west? The air force has attacked German ships off Wilhelmshaven, but apart from that the bombardments have been confined to leaflets. Are British planes being flown to Poland to launch such an offensive from the east? No such reports have been received; and the thick fog of censorship which overnight has blanketed Europe has infinitely increased the confusion. For the moment Hitler's course is more intelligible because his alternatives are less tortuous. His armies are pressing their fierce offensive into Poland, and his air force is mercilessly active. While Hitler himself has rushed to the eastern front, his eyes undoubtedly are pinned on diplomatic as well as military moves in the west. If Poland can be brought to its knees—and the reports are so conflicting as to be almost worthless—he may still try to achieve his peace with the Allies; if not, and this is more likely, he can at least cry out, to his own people and those in neutral countries, that England and France fired the first shot. Italy's role as a neutral obviously coincides with this immediate strategy; for the present Britain and France cannot envisage an advance toward the Brenner Pass, although ultimately they may be forced to make Italy declare which side of the fence it is on. Thus for a tense interval there is a kind of suspended animation on the western front. Meanwhile the British fleet has started to enforce the blockade. In the Balkans there is vast uncertainty and fear, augmented by ignorance of the extent of Russia's agreement with Berlin. The first three days of war have far from fixed the pattern of the struggle. Poland alone has had a full and ghastly preview of what all Europe faces.

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THE APPOINTMENT OF WINSTON CHURCHILL to his 1914 post as First Lord of the Admiralty with a seat in the reduced War Cabinet is the most striking feature of the recent ministerial changes in Britain. Churchill's energies seem in no way diminished, and he has qualities of imagination which should prove most valuable in a war waged under unprecedented conditions. Moreover, his prestige in Britain is at a new peak thanks to his early discernment of the true nature of the Nazi revolution and the campaign he waged to awaken the country to its dangers. The other new recruit to the Cabinet is Lord Hankey, who was one of Lloyd George's chief aids in the last war. Of the rest Leslie Hore-Belisha has proved a vigorous Secretary for War who has swept many cobwebs out of his department and has approached the problem of reorganizing the army with an unusual freshness of mind. The Secretary for Air, Sir Kingsley Wood, is an able administrator to whom a good deal of credit for the strengthening of the air force in the past year seems due. The weakest spots in the Cabinet seem to be the Premier himself and those two saboteurs of the League of Nations and apostles of appeasement, Sir John Simon and Sir Samuel Hoare. Mr. Eden remains outside the War Cabinet but has been given the post of Secretary for the Dominions. With Eire declaring its neutrality, while South Africa wavers, this job will require all the diplomacy he can command.

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DESTROY AND THEN DENY IS THE SLOGAN of the Nazis at war (undeclared); it is the logical sequence to the slogan of the Nazis at peace—make promises in order to break them. In some cases the denying is done first; Hitler's denial that his planes would attack open cities came just before, only just before, the bombing of open cities. The denial of the torpedoing of the Athenia, carrying 1,400 passengers, came after the ship had sunk with the loss of at least 100 lives. Members of the crew testify to having seen a German submarine shortly after the fatal explosion. Hitler will understand why the world puts more faith in the word of a British seaman than in that of the great liberator of poison gas. There was no warning; that is also part of the Nazi technique. The sinking of the Athenia indicates a warfare by Hitler designed like his diplomacy to terrorize by its brutality; it also shows a desperation which will be intensified as starvation rations drain the strength of Germans. The terrorization has already failed, though it will yet take many innocent lives; the Athenia disaster has merely galvanized world opinion against Berlin. But Hitler by these methods is preparing for himself one triumph: he will go out in a blaze of hatred that will make the world's feeling against the Kaiser look like mild approval; and the hottest flames will rise from Germany itself.

THE SMALL EUROPEAN DEMOCRATIC STATES have long determined to remain neutral, if possible, in any war between the major powers. But even if they succeed in staying out they are bound to be seriously affected. Holland, Belgium, and Switzerland, all offering routes around the Maginot and Siegfried lines, have felt it necessary to mobilize, and as long as war lasts they will be compelled to guard their frontiers at enormous expense. Their economic life will be hopelessly dislocated not only by this fact but also by the interruptions to their vital foreign trade. They may even have reason to fear for their importations of food, without which they would be reduced to semi-famine conditions. Denmark, already conscious of Germany's heavy hand, has no means of resisting any demands Berlin may make—demands, for instance, for cooperation with the German navy in closing the entrances to the Baltic. Yet such submission might well bring it into conflict with Britain. Sweden, Norway, and Finland all depend largely on the British market, from which the last-named may be cut off entirely. Sweden and Norway are more favorably situated geographically and have taken steps to become more self-supporting than they were in the last war, when they suffered greatly from a shortage of food and raw materials. The Russo-German pact has removed the fears of these northern states of a conflict in the Baltic in which they would be the innocent victims. But the coming together of the two bogies brings a new terror to these little countries—the possibility of an arrangement between Moscow and Berlin to divide them into spheres of influence or even to swallow them whole. Despite neutrality the northern countries must hope for Nazi defeat.

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THE MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN, NEWLY ARRIVED British ambassador, seems to have made a good first impression on the Washington correspondents. With his wide knowledge of this country and his many contacts here he will no doubt represent the point of view of the British government with discretion. At the moment his task is to gain sympathy for the stand which Britain is making against further encroachments of German aggression, and in so doing he is likely to get a favorable hearing. It must not be forgotten, however, that Lord Lothian bears a heavy responsibility for the fact that Europe's only alternative to accepting the domination of Germany is to suffer the agonies of war. From 1935 until well after Munich he was one of the chief promoters of appeasement, operating through the *Observer* (owned by his close friends, the Astors) and the London *Times* (edited by his old colleague in the Milner "kindergarten," Geoffrey Dawson). Indeed, Lord Lothian is reported to have himself written many of the strongest pro-Nazi editorials in the *Times*. In 1935 he went to Germany and

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visited Hitler, who seems to have impressed him enormously and misled him completely. He returned to proclaim his belief in the Führer's absolute good faith, and despite one torn treaty and broken pledge after another he apparently remained of this conviction until Hitler's entry into Prague. How an intelligent and well-meaning liberal imperialist could have been so bamboozled is one of the mysteries of British upper-class psychology. The fact that he is a man of many possessions is insufficient explanation. Perhaps another factor is his devotion to Christian Science, a faith which puts a premium on unreality. Many times in his career Lord Lothian has shown his susceptibility to strong personalities, and in Washington he will come under the influence of Mr. Roosevelt. We have little fear, therefore, that he will put the President under a British spell. The reverse is far more probable.

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IF YOU'LL TURN OFF THAT PORTABLE RADIO for a minute we'd like to give you a couple of recent bulletins from the American front. They're not as sensational as a European war, they make less noise, especially in the newspapers, than a bombing squadron or the screams of children in a Polish street, but they are significant details even in the early days of September, 1939. First bulletin: On August 11, in New Jersey, seven Negroes, migratory workers in the potato-growing region near Cranbury, were awakened in the middle of the night by a gang of fifteen masked whites. The cabin in which they were living was wrecked and its seven occupants were routed out. All were stripped naked; two of them, a man and his wife, were carried four miles and then covered with white enamel which was beaten into their bodies with a rubber hose. They were told to "head South." At first the state police did nothing; they told reporters it was probably the work of schoolboys who thought it would be fun to scare the workers. Within recent days ten arrests have been made, but the arraignment of the ten was secret and no names were given out. The Workers' Defense League is making every effort to have the criminals brought to justice. Second bulletin: On August 20, in the middle of Jersey City, a Negro whose car *nearly* struck a white couple when the driver swerved to avoid hitting another car, was driven away by a mob that gathered. He went to the police, who sent him back to the scene to get his car. The mob, which was still waiting, set upon him and beat him brutally. The Cranbury mob was obviously inspired by the old slogan of white supremacy. In Jersey City the mob was made up of Italians still inflamed, it is reported, with the anti-Negro propaganda of the Italian-Ethiopian conflict. This bizarre touch only goes to show that anything may happen in New Jersey. The sinister thing is that it usually does.

THE FULL IMPACT OF THE REACTIONARY attack on the WPA at the last session of Congress began to be felt this week as the last of the men who had worked for more than eighteen months on government projects were dismissed, and the new wage scale, which means a loss for many workers, was put into effect. As a result, important works projects throughout the country have been seriously crippled. In New York City the dismissal of some 70,000 WPA employees has caused a grave shortage of skilled workers. Only 26,000 persons have been supplied from the relief rolls to replace them. Twenty projects are being suspended, and scores of others have been slowed down. The great North Beach Airport, one of the largest public-works projects in the country, has been seriously delayed by lay-offs and protest strikes. It must not be forgotten that responsibility for this crisis rests directly with the "economy bloc" in Congress. Every change that this group wrote into the relief bill of 1939 has turned out badly. We have come to depend on the WPA to do most of the construction that was formerly done by municipal, county, state, and federal governments. From the beginning WPA workers have been expected to toil for the country at substandard wages. Now these wages have been further reduced, hours have been lengthened, and a large part of the older, more experienced, and more highly skilled workers laid off. The immediate victims are the workers who have been dismissed or had their wages cut—a group which among all Americans is least in a position to withstand the blow. But the rest of us are losers too in supporting these men on relief rather than employing them in useful and badly needed work.

Munich Bears Fruit

BY FREDA KIRCHWAY

AUGUST, 1938, ended in Munich. August, 1939, ended in war. But, in fact, the new world war was bred at Munich and in the series of surrenders to force and threats that preceded Munich. If August, 1938, had ended in a decision to defend Czechoslovakia as Poland is now being defended, it is possible that no armed conflict would have resulted. Munich persuaded Hitler of the indestructible temper of his nerves, the invincibility of his forces.

This is a strange war. Nobody wanted it, not even Hitler. He wanted, immediately, Danzig and a slice of Poland—but not war. He wanted, ultimately, to overthrow the power of the British and French empires—but without war. I think that he thought he could—not at one bite, but piecemeal, in small and reasonable chunks. He used every subtle and crude method to win world domination without war. He appealed to the uneasy con-

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science of British democrats and to the reactionaries' fears of revolution. He shifted his attack or withdrew when he was firmly opposed. He built an alliance that was ideally suited to strategic maneuver. He made promises which were lies and offered alluring, if deceptive, prospects of permanent peace and disarmament. By these means he won each objective in turn. His claims against Poland were modest, superficially defensible, hard to oppose, obviously "not worth fighting a war over." Would nations that had acquiesced in the destruction of Czechoslovakia boggle over Danzig?

But suddenly the system didn't work. The destruction of Czechoslovakia had demonstrated to statesmen in London and Paris what was known to every common-or-subway newspaper reader and what had been asserted by the greater part of the independent press of the world —that Hitler couldn't be bargained with. The British and French had decided that they would probably have to fight or yield everything. Their preparations for war had been swift and effective. When the demand for Danzig and the Corridor came, they were ready. But Hitler obviously believed to the end, in spite of rearmament and conscription and the slowly growing peace front, that he could have his way without war. Perhaps his successful coup in Moscow helped to deceive him. Perhaps he was misled by the tactics of the British, who even after Poland was invaded, until the final, delayed deadline was passed, kept open the door of negotiation through which Munich was reached a year ago. So Hitler remained unconvinced and unyielding—until at last the door was closed, and war began.

The issue is not a romantic one that can easily be dressed up in the camouflage of propaganda. It is simply this: Hitler's struggle for power must be thwarted. The qualified blessings of old-fashioned imperialism must be preserved as a bulwark against the spread of fascist domination. And democracy—even that "pluto-democracy" derided by Hitler—must be defended against a despotism that would crush all attempts to make democracy real. Put in more concrete words, the governments of the Western nations must fight for their existence, and the peoples must fight to hold on to their hard-won political and economic liberties, to prevent the spread of an organized system of persecution.

Grimly, unhappily, the people of France and England are supporting this war of resistance that no one wants. Observers report a mood of fatalism, the absence of any glorification or excitement. The men of Munich are silent. None of the feverish conflict of opinion that divided the left parties in all countries in 1914 can today be found. Socialist and Communist deputies joined in voting the war credits in both France and England. The Socialist intransigents that still survive must be unhappy in their realization that war offers to their comrades in Germany the first real chance of deliverance.

A few voices have been raised in behalf of a decent peace. In London the *New Statesman and Nation* has been urging for months that plans for a new European settlement be made a part of the program of the peace front. Now that war has come, it is even more essential to prepare for peace; the pleas of the British Prime Minister to the German people would sound less hollow if they included promises of a genuine attempt to eliminate the sources of economic and political conflict on the Continent and in the world at large. It is necessary to smash Hitlerism and to eliminate Hitler. No new Europe can be designed to fit the pattern of fascist despotism. But the defeat of Germany will breed a new Hitler unless the powers are able to find a stable basis for European society.

This is easy to say. It will be hard to achieve. War breeds primitive solutions. Vengeance is easier than reconstruction and planning. The hopes of all decent men and women in 1914 were shattered in 1918. A few sentences from an editorial on the war printed in *The Nation* for August 13, 1914, are worth recalling here:

> The one consolation in it all is that if humanity is not to retrograde unspeakably, absolutism must pay for this denial of Christianity. Out of the ashes must come a new Germany in which democracy shall rule, in which no one man and no group of professional man-killers shall have the power to plunge the whole world into mourning.

Those were brave and hopeful words; today they read like an accusation. We know now how difficult it is to build decency on horror; but we know even better than we did twenty-five years ago what are the penalties of failure.

Measures "Short of War"

IN HIS impressive radio talk to "the whole of America" the President made clear his aim to keep this country out of the war in terms that left no doubts about his sincerity. This declaration has been followed by the proclamation of American neutrality in accordance with the requirements of international law and by making operative the provisions of the Neutrality Act. The State Department has also moved to limit the chances of Americans being involved in war incidents by severely restricting the issue of passports.

These are all necessary and inevitable steps at this time, but while they express the present hopes of Americans they do not govern our future actions, which will be determined by the pressure of events on public opinion. In his radio address Mr. Roosevelt said: "It is of the utmost importance that the people of this country, with the best information in the world, think things through." One question about which hard, cool thinking is required

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is how far the present Neutrality Act makes effective the sentiments of Americans in respect to the war situation. There can be very little disagreement about what those sentiments are at this moment. Compared to 1914 there is very little neutrality of thought; the vast majority have set their hopes on an Allied victory. Nor is this hope purely disinterested: we have a firm conviction that the domination of Europe by Hitlerism would be dangerous for our national interests. At the same time most Americans believe that this country ought not to become involved in the conflict. The existing Neutrality Act can hardly be said to be a very potent instrument for furthering either of these not entirely consistent views. True, it bans the export of munitions and implements of war, but it leaves belligerents free to buy all other commodities in our markets, including such essentials of modern warfare as oil and copper, and to ship them by American merchant vessels. Consequently there is nothing to prevent our becoming involved in difficulties through the blockades which both the Allies and Germany will attempt to maintain. The Bloom neutrality bill, indorsed by the President and likely to be reconsidered shortly in special session, avoids this prospect by introducing the "cash-and-carry" principle. If it became law, all belligerents would be free to buy whatever goods, including arms, they were able to pay for in cash and to carry away on their own ships. In practice this measure would favor Britain and France since they have the cash and command the Atlantic. But these are factors beyond our control, and it is absurd to pretend that the passage of this bill would bring us any nearer to war. Certainly Germany, whose one hope is to keep us as isolated as possible, is not going to regard such action as a *casus belli*. And if the effect should be to help the Allies to a more speedy victory, that would decrease the danger of our being drawn in, which must grow with every month the war goes on.

Actually the issue of our participation or non-participation is not likely to be much affected one way or another by the existing neutrality law or any other act possible of passage. In Wall Street in the past few days there has begun a boom, not only in aviation and munition stocks, but in steels, coppers, oils, and chemicals, and in all kinds of commodities. Unless we intend to ban all trade whatever with belligerent countries, the war will certainly bring about a demand for goods which is bound to stimulate our economy for a time, particularly those branches which have been most depressed —the capital-goods industries. Thus inevitably we shall acquire an economic stake in an Allied victory just as we have already a moral and emotional stake. Yet neither of these things should prove decisive in swinging opinion toward American entry into the war. If that does come to pass, the basic cause will almost certainly be a fear that the alternative is a German victory.

Hitler's Calendar

HITLER is a liar. He himself would not consider this a reproach, for he expressly justifies the lie as a political weapon in "Mein Kampf"; moreover, he says that it is easier to put over a big lie on the average honest fellow than a small lie. Yet Hitler has never lied about his intentions; Nevile Henderson reported that Hitler told him on August 25 that he "accepts the British Empire and is ready to pledge himself personally for its continued existence." The next step on his ascent to world power, by which the British Empire was to become one of his protectorates, was to get control of Poland. The date-by-date record of his moves since the first days of August makes the pattern clear.

August 8: The Danzig Nazi leader, Albert Förster, confers with Hitler at Berchtesgaden.

August 11: Italian Foreign Minister Ciano meets Hitler at Berchtesgaden.

August 15: In Berlin it is emphasized that "any attempt to minimize the significance of the Italo-German conversation will be a fatal illusion."

August 16: The Hungarian Foreign Minister is received at Berchtesgaden. During the same day German sources assert that Germany will insist on fulfilment of its demands on Poland: Danzig and a road to East Prussia through the Corridor.

August 18: Germany suddenly takes military possession of Slovakia.

August 19: Mobilization of the Slovakian army is announced. Lord Halifax returns from his vacation. In Moscow *Pravda* reprints an article from the British Communist daily, warning against the approach of a new Munich.

August 20: German-Russian trade agreement announced in Berlin.

August 21: Impending conclusion of German-Russian non-aggression pact announced in Berlin.

August 23: Ribbentrop arrives in Moscow; the German-Russian non-aggression pact is signed in record time—twelve hours.

August 24: Nevile Henderson confers with Hitler: "The Führer left no doubt in the mind of the British Ambassador that the obligations assumed by the British government could not induce Germany to renounce the defense of her vital interests." Hitler, it is reported, has ordered his army to be ready for action.

August 25: Hitler makes Albert Förster his *Statthalter* in Danzig.

August 26: It is revealed that, in their meeting two days before, Hitler had told Henderson Britain must abandon its alliance with Poland.

August 27: Hitler, in a "man-to-man" reply to Daladier, who had urged negotiations but pledged France's readiness to fight, says he too loves peace; he then reiterates his "minimum demands." The National Socialist Party "peace congress" is canceled. Germany puts the finishing touches on its mobilization.

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August 28: Hitler receives Henderson, who brings a message from London reaffirming its pledge to Poland, but urging negotiations between Germany and Poland.

August 29: Hitler's reply is sent to London; it again demands fulfilment of his "minimum demands" as a prerequisite to negotiation.

August 30: Hitler gets an answer from London which reiterates Britain's refusal to coerce Poland into surrender and again appeals for negotiation. Hitler sets up a council for the "defense of the realm."

August 31: Danzig joins the Reich; Ribbentrop reads to Henderson a "sixteen-point" program for settlement of the Polish issue, but Warsaw reveals that it never received a copy of the terms.

September 1: Hitler invades Poland.

Hitler, then, did not lie about his intentions. But every reason with which he justified his intentions was a lie from beginning to end.

The clearest expression of these lies is contained in his letter to Daladier, and he repeated the same lies over and over again in his war speech before the German Reichstag on September 1 when his airplanes were already bombing open cities in Poland. Hitler stated his case as follows: He made an "offer" to Poland—Poland should give him Danzig and a corridor through the Corridor—but Poland, backed up by England, answered this "reasonable" suggestion with "an unbearable terror, a physical and economic persecution of the Germans." Therefore he must defend Germany's honor and remove "the Macedonian conditions on our eastern frontier." But what even those who should remember tend to forget is that there was no Polish problem last March, before Hitler had conquered Czechoslovakia and was free to turn on Poland.

After Munich Poland was Hitler's partner in crime; it was even allowed to snatch a piece of Czechoslovakia. There had been no friction between Poland and the Third Reich since 1933. Hitler boasted in 1934, on the occasion of the conclusion of the ten-year Polish-German non-aggression pact, which he tore to pieces this spring, that he had made peace overnight between Poles and Germans. This non-aggression pact, at the time of its conclusion, was a great surprise to everyone who had still in his ears the hysterical anti-Polish shrieks of Hitler, the oppositionist, agitating against the Brüning government. Poland was then as now the arch enemy of Germany; a year later Poland was a friend of Germany. It remained a friend for five years, then suddenly became the arch enemy again, this time of a Germany far stronger than the Reich of 1933. (In the same fashion, but in reverse, the Bolshevik arch enemy became overnight a friend.)

It should be clear by now that Danzig, the Corridor, the German minorities in Poland—every reason Hitler gave for going to war—were merely pretexts. His fantastic dream of conquering the world is his only truth. Even Mr. Chamberlain understands that now.

Europe Goes to War

BY LOUIS FISCHER

Paris, September 4 (by radio)

THE issue of course is not Danzig or the Corridor, or even Poland. A life-and-death struggle between Germany and the French and English has begun. Hitler hopes to succeed where the Kaiser failed.

For years I have written that the anti-Comintern pact was not aimed at the Comintern or at Russia but at the French and British empires. In Spain Germany and Italy were not fighting Bolshevism, as they declaimed every minute to the gullible Spanish rebels and their foreign sympathizers; they were attempting to encircle France and weaken England. In Czechoslovakia Hitler was not seeking justice or living space for the Germans; he wished to deprive England and France of a powerful ally in Central Europe.

Now he wants Poland. That country would not solve Germany's economic or population problems. Like Austria and Czechoslovakia, it would merely aggravate them. Poland was a military asset for the Western powers: if Hitler had attacked them, Poland would have created an eastern front. That is why he was bent on crushing Poland first; that is why England and France decided to defend Poland. It's self-defense. England and France have belatedly determined on a preventive war. Anti-fascism is involved only indirectly. For France and England it is essentially a question of national safety, indeed, of national existence. The blood vessels of France run through Poland, and Hitler would like to open them. France is the right arm of Britain. Spain and Czechoslovakia were as an epidermis. Their loss made the British more sensitive to danger and more reactive to bruising. This physiology killed appeasement. The war guilt can be apportioned later. Hitler will have a lot of company.

Hitler used all his wiles to revive appeasement. The invitation to Burkhardt to come to Berchtesgaden, the conclusion of the Russo-German pact, Hitler's proposals for the vivisection of Poland made to the British and French ambassadors during the last week of August, finally his hysterical demand to Nevile Henderson that Colonel Beck appear on the carpet before him within twenty-four hours—all these add up to thwarted appeasement. August, 1939, was for Hitler an abortive Munich.

The moment I arrived in Europe three weeks ago it was obvious to me that Hitler could have his war if he wanted it. At last the English and French governments had decided not to yield. The only hope of peace was Hitler's retreat. Any encouragement to the Nazis at this juncture was therefore a crime and a war stimulant. These are the characteristics of the Russo-German treaty. It is doubtful whether Hitler would or could have halted in any case, but the handshake of Stalin and von Rib-

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bentrop made the catastrophe surer and introduced another member into the society of war promoters. Theretofore Stalin had been the only one who didn't live in a glass house and consequently was entitled to throw stones. It is as foolish to say that Russian policy has always been bad because it is bad now as to say that it is good now because it has always been good, or that Chamberlain's policy cannot be good now because it has always been bad.

The Anglo-French firmness in the face of Moscow's defection demonstrates that the instinct for self-preservation is at last operating. The war will be bitter and implacable. The mood in Paris and London today is to fight for a Versailles which will out-Versailles Brest-Litovsk. I understand this sentiment, although I hate it. A Frenchwoman said to me yesterday, "I gave my husband in 1914. He never returned. Now I give my boy." Indeed, men who fought in the trenches for four years are being called up again.

None believed it would happen until the last second. In Germany and here the common man expected some final "twist" to avert the ordeal. Determination will harden when the casualty lists lengthen and when the release of passions banishes the lingering moderation born of peace-time hopes. Yesterday I drove around the streets of Paris and nearby towns; women bit their nails and wept; men were grave but resolute, and already some were generating a gambler's excitement by discussing the prospects.

The Anglo-French problem is to find a battlefield on which to attack Germany. The Allies could help Poland through Rumania. We may see the Turks fighting in Poland. Even a complete occupation of Poland would not be a major catastrophe; the World War lasted four years after the subjugation of Belgium. It remains to be seen how long the Nazi economy and social system can resist the strain. Only the frivolous are sanguine. Experts expect a titanic and prolonged struggle because the Allies must get up momentum and obtain access to German territory; it may be shortened, however, in proportion to its intensity.

Every French person I encounter inquires about material aid from America and—today—about possible American reaction to the sinking of the Athenia. A moratorium has been declared on all phases of internal politics; even anti-Communist sentiment is quiescent for the sake of national unity. (Intellectual courage would serve the Communist Parties better in this crisis than wooden discipline.) But not even bombs and guns can silence the diplomats. Enemies must be forced into neutrality; neutrals into activity. France needs first to make Italy harmless. The axis was welded by the expectation of easy booty through blackmail; it was forged in the smithy of appeasement. Only Anglo-French firmness could ever have broken or bent it. Mussolini will watch the calendar. In September, while the passes in the Alps are not snowbound, France can invade Italy. Before November the hot weather limits the scope of military operations in northern Africa. Mussolini and Hitler may therefore have agreed on a temporary Italian neutrality. But war would bring Italy great harm. The Duce's decision will reveal his estimate of his own strength and also of Hitler's strength. Rome always wants to be with the winner.

Spain also is wavering. The country is tired. It needs the profits of a neutral trader to reconstruct itself. The Russo-German pact has made Franco's war-time propaganda ridiculous and embarrassed his relations with the axis. The English and French are exploiting the new situation, but the German press still hopes for Spanish aid. Whatever Spain does it won't change the fact that Hitler's brazen invasion of Spain fed his paranoiac faith in his invincibility and reinforced fascist contempt for the non-fascist powers. Czechoslovakia was thus doomed in Spain, just as Spain, Russia, and Czechoslovakia were lost at Munich.

During the first stage of the war a diplomatic Rialto will flourish behind the burning scene. Countries will be bought, territories sold. Governments will be courted and terrorized. In the years of vacillation and surrender the Western powers lost prestige, influence, and strategic positions. They must quickly recoup them all. What will Rumania and Hungary do? If Rumania is neutral, Russian supplies can go up the Danube to Germany. With Russia neutral, Sweden and the Baltic states will sell Germany goods under pressure or from friendship. What will Russia do? The September 1 issue of the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* says frankly that the Russo-German treaty not merely weakens the Anglo-French alliance but constitutes a positive contribution "toward the new order in Europe." Moscow is a dangerous enigma. The pendulum of the Kremlin clock swings fast and never stops halfway.

This war is an irrefutable condemnation of the policy of appeasement. There hasn't been peace in our time, or even for one year. Czechoslovakia was a juster cause and could have had more allies. Spain's salvation would have been an easier task than the defense of Poland and Czechoslovakia and might have made both unnecessary. The irony is that Paris has taken on the face of Madrid and Barcelona during 1936-39: the same blue lights, darkened streets, air-raid shelters, sandbags. Yesterday the treasures of the Prado, painstakingly safeguarded by the Loyalists and sent to Geneva, left France by truck for Madrid. Simultaneously the Louvre is being emptied. The international brigadiers who fought for France in University City and on the Ebro are volunteering to fight Germany again, this time in the ranks of the French army. It is no comfort to have foreseen and written these things during the past three fateful years.

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Roosevelt Takes Sides

BY KENNETH G. CRAWFORD

Washington, September 1

THE European crisis has pulled enough foliage off the Washington trees to give a clear view of the woods. Frankness induced by tension has cleared up several important questions. For example: Is the Roosevelt Administration neutral? Certainly not. Is there any chance for the United States to stay out of another world war? Practically none. Will the Roosevelt program of liberal reform go on in the event of a general war? It will not. Would such a war solve the country's more pressing economic problems? Temporarily, yes. Would the outbreak of war mean a third term for President Roosevelt? Probably.

The Administration from the President down is sympathetic with the cause of Great Britain and France. It will do everything possible "short of war" to promote their cause. As it sees the issue, the fight is between free institutions, recognition of the dignity of the individual, and the orderly conduct of world affairs on one side and reversion to nationalistic intolerance, race persecution, and international gangsterism on the other. Officials are confessing that, sooner or later, they expect another war to make the world safe for democracy, although they avoid that way of expressing it. Occasionally a doctrinaire isolationist within the New Deal defends the German objective of a united, economically self-sufficient Central Europe, but already this is heresy.

By this time the partisanship of the President and most of his advisers is so self-evident that it is a commonplace. Yet only a few weeks ago it was carefully concealed. Members of the isolationist bloc in Congress would have seized upon any one of several crisis incidents as proof that Roosevelt was "pulling Britain's chestnuts out of the fire again" had they occurred before adjournment. What a frenzy the President's order holding up the sailing of the Bremen would have created, to cite one of them. Obviously the search was unnecessary, despite the President's legalistic explanation, and the real object was to extend the time in which the British navy could keep the liner under surveillance on the high seas as a hostage to peace. In the circumstances it is significant that no influential voice, not even a Republican voice, was raised against the "search for arms" that held the liner in New York for two days. Neither was there a protest against the President's assurance to Lord Lothian that the United States and Great Britain see eye to eye in their quest for a permanent peace.

Still more surprising, no immediate outcry greeted the President's claim that the failure of the Senate to repeal existing neutrality legislation was a factor—great or small—in bringing about the Danzig crisis. Silence seemed to indicate that the Senators responsible for obstruction of the New Deal neutrality program, after listening to the radio with everyone else and feeling out back-home sentiment, had lost their enthusiasm for the fight on foreign policy. Not that Hiram Johnson, Gerald Nye, and Bennett Clark can be expected to surrender without a protest. They will hold out for strict neutrality and isolation, but unless sentiment changes radically before Congress reconvenes, they will have no chance of winning. There is every indication that the country is for Roosevelt's policy of non-neutrality—that it particularly wants to supply Great Britain and France with arms and ammunition. Only in the Middle Western states does the traditional isolationism survive, and here it is weakening. Contrasted with the situation in 1914, when sentiment seemed about equally divided between the Allies and the Central Powers, when pro-German demonstrations were not uncommon, and when the crew of a German submarine was publicly feted in Washington, the present state of public opinion is phenomenal.

The President doubtless believes that sympathy for the democracies can be safely harnessed and made to serve his demand for greater latitude in the conduct of foreign affairs. He has never suggested, unless his program for rearmament is such a suggestion, that this country's help to the democracies will eventually drag the United States into war. The United States is to be a base of supply but not an active participant in the next war. Never has he publicly—or privately, so far as I know—expressed the fear that public opinion, already so greatly aroused against Hitler, may kick over the traces when the shooting starts, when the American radio audience tunes in on bombings of civilians in London and Paris, and when the atrocity stories start circulating. Perhaps Roosevelt can stop with measures short of war, but it isn't a safe bet with radio communication as good as it is and the case for Hitler as bad as it is.

Added to the emotional pull there is, of course, the lure of war profits. Already it is making itself felt. The stock market is poised for flight. Business, still gaining on the strength of the government's 1939 spending program, is eager for more orders. Farmers see a chance to prop up sagging commodity prices. Consciously or unconsciously many New Deal officials would welcome the easy way out. Great Britain and France combined have cash and assets worth about $3,000,000,000 in this

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country, according to Commerce Department estimates. All this could be spent on supplies without offending against the Johnson Act. And Jesse Jones, after a recent White House conference, pointed out that the RFC and the Export-Import Bank could extend credits to Europe and still keep within the technicalities of the law. The wages of a war boom is a post-war bust, but that isn't an effective deterrent.

During the boom most of the New Deal's gains would be dissipated. Unemployment would diminish and wages would be high, but labor would be expected to "behave." If this country became a belligerent, the mobilization of resources already planned would bring about an even tighter economic dictatorship than existed in 1917. How ominous such a dictatorship would be is indicated by the fact that General Hugh Johnson said in a recent column that he had seen the prospectus, although it is still secret, and found it good. It would, he said, "revitalize capitalism and the profit system." Looking over the membership of the new War Industries Board, headed by Edward Stettinius of United States Steel, one can guess how far the revitalization would go.

Reform and liberalism of course would be forgotten in the event of war. Indeed, the crisis has been enough to put them on ice. The President is so absorbed in foreign affairs that he has little time for domestic concerns. A war, even if the United States stayed out, could submerge New Deal issues, bring on a spell of national solidarity, and produce an almost irresistible demand for the President to see the country through the conflict.

Mexico Today

III. DANGER ON THE RIGHT

BY WALDO FRANK

THE THREAT OF COUNTER-REVOLUTION

OUTSIDE the capital the new good spirits of the people—who eat more wheat, wear more shoes, begin to sleep in beds, and love their leader—have made for an optimism that is too subjective to be sound; within Mexico City—which opposed the Independence, supported Díaz, accepted the bloody Huerta, hates or distrusts Cárdenas, and suffers from higher prices for imported goods—the prevailing mood is doubt. The bureaucrats see their own vices, the servants their own servility, and project them on the nation. This pessimism also is subjective. But danger is present. The revolution in Mexico is too deep a challenge not to be threatened.

The direct Nazi-Fascist threat is slim—outside the small heads of the oil companies' propagandists. There are about 7,000 Germans in the republic, of whom perhaps 400 are Nazis and another 1,000 Nazi sympathizers. As to the Italians, here as elsewhere they possess few Roman virtues and few Roman vices. (In all Rome's history, there was no blow-hard like Mussolini unless it was Catiline.) The Mexican government sells oil to Italy and Germany, of course—many millions of barrels; it must sell where it can; it will drop the disadvantageous barter system as soon as the "democracies" give it a chance. There are no solid nuclei of Germans, Italians, Japanese in Mexico, like those which Brazil encouraged under the inspiration of the race theories of the Comte de Gobineau, and which the present government is rapidly disbanding or neutralizing. German penetration in Mexico is slight—much slighter than in the United States. The direct Fascist-Nazi "threat" in Mexico is a myth—an even more absurd one than the "Bolshevist menace" in a country whose President, with his syndicalist-liberal notions, would long ago have been liquidated by either Stalin or Trotsky. The Catholic hierarchy, which daily shames Jesus Christ, would gladly flirt with Mussolini or any other scoundrel who promised it the kingdoms of the earth that Christ rejected. But now that the churches are open, now that in the capital's cathedral alone on a Sunday morning you can see more priests officiate than the law allows for the whole town (Cárdenas knows this, of course, and smiles), now that the public schools bloom and the old Catholic "bootleg" schools dwindle even in Jalisco, home of the savagely reactionary Cristeros, there is not enough body behind the hierarchy to make a serious flirtation with the Nazi-Fascists possible.

More of a promise from the Black and Brown standpoint is Mexico's Spanish colony, whose members are still leaders in commerce, publicity, and reaction. Franco's victory has given them the cheap courage of success. They are articulate, comparatively rich; they have a long tradition of traffic—and exploitation—in Mexico; and they speak the same tongue as Mexico's own upper classes.

The term to describe the mood of these classes is "sullen." Two years ago I heard the *señoritos* say openly, despite their aristocratic hate of the gringo: "If we must choose between Cárdenas and the United States, we'll take the latter." They are not saying this now, because they are more hopeful. The elections are coming; the

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politics of the succession is confused: they will fish in the troubled waters.

The classes to which I refer are the *hacendados,* to a large degree dispossessed of their great lands, though not landless, who have won small fortunes, mostly invested abroad, from earlier traffic with foreign interests, and who are usually allied with the rich Spaniards; the families that got rich in politics or in commerce allied with politics, from the days of Díaz to the recent days of Calles (the former President Rodríquez, reputed to be worth $15,000,000, is an exception in that he sold out not Mexicans or Mexican resources but Americans—he owns the Casino in Tia Juana); the families of men who have directly and legally served the American interests, perhaps as lawyers or as engineers; and, finally, the gilded riffraff of the big towns, whose wealth comes from hotels, restaurants, brothels.

These sullen classes own and control the important daily and weekly press of the nation. It is rumored that papers like *Excelsior* and *La Prensa* receive regular stipends from Berlin. If so, they are merely receiving help from their natural friends. Successful magazines like *Hoy* and *Novedades* print scurrilous pages on the " Communist Jews" that might be translations from the *Stürmer.* On a popular newsstand in the Avenida Juárez I counted seventeen Mexican publications, daily and weekly, of which fifteen were reactionary or openly fascist; one, being purely pornographic, was above politics, and one was of the left, *El Nacional,* the struggling daily organ of the P. R. M., which is published at a deficit. (There is more to the left press: *El Popular* of Vicente Lombardo Toledano's powerful Confederación de Trabajadores de México, the C. T. M., which has more than 500,000 members; the Communist *Voz de México;* and a weekly comic edited by the D. A. P. P.—all together, they have not half the circulation of one of the large reactionary dailies.)

Why is this? Most of Mexico does not read at all. The fraction that does prefers to pay its centavos for the news and dapper pictures of the "other world," the bourgeoisie; prefers the pepper of the opposition to the sugar of its own party organs, and wants the contact with commerce and with the Great Outside which it can get only in the bourgeois papers.

The total effect of this press is a sabotage which through sheer repetition and lack of competent reply must have its effect on the public mind.* Moreover, the servile servants of this press include some of the cleverest writers and artists of the country: the prostitute "poets" whom Plato properly excluded from his Republic. More than one "literary leader" of ten years ago—imitators of Cocteau and Joyce—today pen poisonous editorials in the great press.

The sabotage has other forms: slander and gossip, for example. One day, after my hours with the Indians in Toluca, I dined with the owner of a nearby ranch whose hospitality I shall now ungraciously repay by telling the typical truth about him. This gentleman had lost thousands of acres to the *ejidos;* about three hundred remained his, in corn and wheat and rice: but I saw no signs of poverty in his mansion or in the feast with which he regaled us. With the generous dishes came the slander: every man in the Cárdenas government was a crook; the President's brothers were robbers; the President's wife had bought a hotel in New York, another in Buenos Aires. While the mean talk went on, like a counter-theme in my mind ran the report I had had the day before, from a responsible source, about the sabotage of my host's class in Yucatán. But for the *agave* that yields the *hennequén* fiber, the Yucatecas would starve. The rich landowners, foreseeing the expropriation of their land, deliberately failed to plant the seedlings sufficient to replace the old *agaves,* which die after fifteen to twenty years of yield. It takes seven years for the seedling to give the fiber. In consequence of this diabolic plan, when the *ejidos* took over the land they faced years of actual want. This spirit of sabotage and the talk of mine host are typical of the "educated" upper classes.

More serious than slander, slanderous press, and open sabotage is the cultural influence of these groups. The humble Mexican has an aesthetic sense of life capable of becoming *vision,* but it is rooted in his instinctive world; when that world goes, before the dangerous, the inevitable modern transition—in which the "democracies" of Europe have foundered—he loses his eyes. Here is an example: When I visited Cuernavaca I admired again the palace of Cortés, marveling at the unspent energy and grace of that great man after the effort of his conquest. And I admired the proud murals of Diego Rivera in the palace porch, overlooking the sweet town and the gorge. The palace now houses the governor of the state of Morelos. He invited me to his private rooms and showed me with pride some recent murals, painted at his orders, that portray episodes of the Emperor Maximilian's sojourn in Cuernavaca. I will not name the perpetrator of these chromos, separated by a wall from the great work of Diego. The Governor boasts of them; one of his assistants told me that they are "part of the Governor's cultural effort to counteract the fantastic muddles of Señor Rivera." The Governor's favorite is a daub of the Emperor on a white horse smirking at a fat Indian girl who rises from the flowered grass behind a tree like

* They are clever with statistics. For instance, *Excelsior* (the New York *Times* of Mexico) recently printed the figures of the increased imports of corn as proof that the collective farms had collapsed. The truth is that the consumption of all foods among the lowest classes has greatly increased: the Mexican peasant is beginning to eat more than the traditional tortilla, frijole, and chile against which experts like Manuel Gamio have agitated for years. And it is true that in the transition to the *ejido* system wheat and cotton have frequently been sown to the neglect of cheaper crops like corn. This is a disease and a disorder of transition. The papers consistently show bad faith in discussing it.

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a varicolored fountain. "That," said the Governor, "is a picture which will prove to my people that the Indians are not an inferior race. For it shows an Emperor in love with an Indian girl." This vulgarity you will not find in the schools or in the *ejidos,* but in strata of the favored workers, in the army, in the offices of the bureaucrats. To the subtle dawning life of Mexico it is more dangerous than battles.

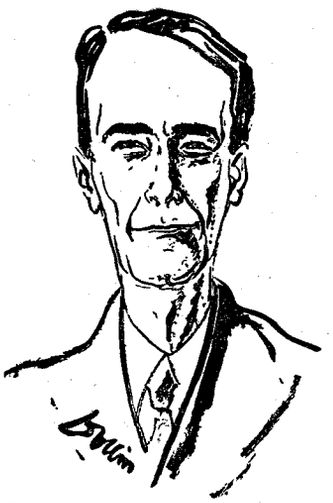
THE PEOPLE'S ARMY

There are about four hundred generals in Mexico, approximately four to every five hundred soldiers. Most of them are legacies of the violent years after 1910, in which natural leaders sprang up everywhere in the chaotic land, gathered a local force, and called themselves general because they knew no higher title. Some of these generals are still today in the vanguard: for instance, Francisco Mugica, who would be the next President if progress were a straight and not a dialectic line; and Heriberto Jara of Vera Cruz, the beautiful gray-haired leader of the military schools. Some have become pillars of the revolution's "center": for instance, the honest, plodding present Minister of Foreign Affairs, Eduardo Hay. But revolution is cruel to its fathers; its face soon differs from their dream, and its pace disorients them. In Russia they shoot the renegades, the misfits, the weary. In Mexico they have honored these men, given them land—and they hope for the best.

Possibly a majority of the old generals, grown fat, rich, and dull, look on the revolution's present liveliness with ugly eyes. General Cedillo was archetypal, except that his excess stupidity and conceit led him into the trap of open revolt that Cárdenas had baited with his toleration. More intelligent are Generals Rafael Sanchez Tapia and Ramón Iturbe, who with General Joaquín Amaro have openly bolted the dominant P. R. M. Such men and their followers are the hope of the sullen classes.

More sinister is General Juan Andreu Almazán, commander of the military zone of Monterrey. During my six weeks in the republic I saw the various elements of the right crystallize about him. He is known as a good administrator; he professes loyalty to the revolution and to the P. R. M.; he claims to be a friend of Cárdenas, who recently lunched with him in his new quarters. If he is managing his own campaign he is a very clever man.

The fight for the succession will be the fight for the approval of the P. R. M.; and today it lies between Almazán and General Manuel Avila Camacho, who at this writing is far ahead, having the support of both the C. T. M. and the collective farmers. Avila Camacho is an old friend of Lombardo Toledano, who backs him because he thinks he can "run" him. But the type of weak man who is hoisted into power because he can be "run" may be won by other persuasions. The game is dangerous. The recent resignation of Rodríguez, president of the P. R. M., points to Lombardo's weakness with Cárdenas and may in turn weaken Lombardo with the C. T. M. and the entire country. For it is plain that Cárdenas let Rodríguez go in order to prove to the nation that he was not, however indirectly, controlling the party machine for Avila Camacho. It is not inconceivable that Avila Camacho, whose open campaign has lacked the skill of Almazán's undeclared one, may be sacrificed also in order to ward off the opposition of the sullen classes. Almazán, as President, would move to the right as swiftly as he dared. Avila Camacho is imprisoned to the reasonable left of true radicals like Lombardo. If he wins legally, an open rebellion is conceivable. Almazán would be its leader, the chambers of commerce and the Callistas would be its treasurers, and more than half the generals would be its soldiers. If it could count on a reactionary or indifferent government in Washington in 1940, it might succeed.



Lombardo Toledano

Would that mean the end of the Mexican revolution? By no means. But once again the heroic, constructive peace of the Cárdenas regime would break; once again tragic Mexico would plunge into a period of disorder. I described this danger as I saw it to the President. Lázaro Cárdenas nodded and said the army would not march. Through the schools of the children of the soldiers and through the spread upward of officers from the lower ranks, the army is being transformed into a people's army. It is one of the elements of the P. R. M., coordinate with the farmers, teachers, and workers. Moreover, the Old Guard is dying off, and those who remain are losing caste, even in the army. So Cárdenas has faith in it, as has Lombardo Toledano, who, however, to make sure, has put guns into the hands of his trade unions.

My purpose, in these articles, is to present the facts. Let me, however, say this—since judgment must color fact. I have no doubt of the growing solidarity of feeling between soldier and worker, although it is not yet mature. I have no doubt of the ultimate victory of the Mexican people, on whose intuition Lázaro Cárdenas stakes the life of his work, although that intuition also is not yet mature. Is the period of tragic trial and tragic error past? With all my heart, for the sake of all America, I

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hope so. But let me recall a talk I had a few days ago in tête-à-tête with José Miaja, defender of Madrid, that generous, candid Asturian peasant who by some miracle became a general in Spain's regular army. I asked him, as a year ago I had asked President Manuel Azaña: "Did you not foretell the military revolt?" "Yes," said Miaja, like Azaña. "But two disasters I did not foresee: that the non-commissioned officers would go out with the generals; and that large bodies of the troops would rebel, *thinking they were defending the Republic.* When they found out their error, it was too late."

If a blow is struck in Mexico by Mexico's representatives of world reaction, I am sure that the majority of the citizens, civil or in uniform, will make the right decision, *provided they know the facts.* No wonder the reactionaries and their servants study the Hitlerian art of falsehood.

POLITICAL DANGERS

A nation politically and culturally mature could laugh at counter-revolutionary threats. But men of good-will in our world do not suddenly grow the wings and the wisdom of archangels. It may hearten the journalists of the Standard Oil to be told that Mexico is a very imperfect country.

Under Cárdenas, who has the apostle's devotion and the apostle's capacity for work—eighteen hours a day, seven days a week—the Mexican government continues to suffer from the bureaucratism, incompetence, and sloth that are Mexico's political tradition. Corruption in public life is ever in inverse ratio to the vigilance of the people. If recently graft has decreased in England and the United States, it is solely because the people have grown proportionately more aware. Mexico has no cogent public opinion. Its politics has been a business for politicians and an emotional holiday for the masses following their *caudillo.* This changes slowly.

Lázaro Cárdenas in my judgment is a great man; he is the one figure comparable, as an effective articulation of an entire people's spirit, to India's Gandhi. I have no space here to analyze his original method, his profound vision and sense of Mexico—far deeper and truer than was that of Benito Juárez. But he has grave defects which become dangers as his regime draws to a close and it appears that he intends to abide by the spirit of the law of non-reelection. If a good administrator is a good delegator, Cárdenas lacks this virtue, so sorely needed because so rare in Mexico. So far as I can see, whatever works well in his government is what he personally touches. He has made poor choices in the Cabinet—Cedillo, for instance, was there for three whole years! He is reluctant to change, perhaps wisely figuring that the cost in instability would be greater than the improvement. All his military selections are good; often it appears that he has not an equal understanding of men in civil life. But I am not sure. The method of Cárdenas is not direct and simple; it is intuitive, organic, truly "dialectic." Many of the younger men today in subordinate office are extremely good men, men superior to their superiors: for instance, Ramón Beteta, Under Secretary of Foreign Relations; Chavez Orozco, former Under Secretary of Education and now chief of the Office for Indigenes; and Gabino Vazquez, chief of the Department of Labor.

Against the a-politicalism of the people, in itself a danger, Cárdenas formed last year the P. R. M., which includes most of the organized working groups of the nation: labor, the organized farms, teachers, students, soldiers, and a vague "popular front" of the petty bourgeoisie. The P. R. M.'s foes liken it to the totalitarian parties of Russia and the fascist countries, which is absurd. There are other legal parties in Mexico, from the Communist Party to the fascist "anti-Communist Democrats." And in the P. R. M. there are many factions whose power has recently been proved by the forced resignation of Rodríguez. Nevertheless, despite this internal freedom which may turn into chaos, the P. R. M. tends to be too absorptive. Mexican politics has not reached the stage of heterogeneous coherence. The United Front of Chile is more mature, consisting of more organic entities; and so should be the United Front of Argentina when the present political revolt against President Ortiz has gained ground.

The great integer within the P. R. M., of course, is Lombardo Toledano's C. T. M. But Lombardo, although honest and devoted, lacks the peasant genius of Cárdenas, and possibly his cunning. There is a good deal of the doctrinaire about Lombardo. Like certain leaders of the Spanish Republic, and for the same reason, he has been perhaps too fascinated by the ready-made discipline, the dogmatic sureties of the Marxists, whose astringent rationalism will never express the Hispano-Indo-American spirit. Lombardo, the good intellectual, has made an efficient "dialectical" partner to the non-intellectual, intuitive Cárdenas. With Avila Camacho, in every way an inferior man, this subtle balance would be lost. The rigidities of Lombardo's thought might in a crisis prove a danger to the organic devious course which Mexico's people, the most gifted and the least intellectualized of all Americans, must follow.

Meanwhile the benefits of his regime are great. Under him the C. T. M. has organized and is educating labor. The Universidad Obrera is too heavily doctrinaire, but it does accord a mental discipline acutely needed. The workers are armed and are being trained against the threat of reaction; and nothing heartened me more than their blue-clad ranks openly marching in the streets. The bourgeois press is full of the incompetence of the railroads and of the Pemex (Petroleos Mexicanos). But to pretend that the men worked better under Díaz or Doheny is insincere. The retreat of the oil interests lost

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to the country many a good technician—and also many poor ones who had come to Mexico through favoritism. Mexico's industries are not mature; the freedom to strike is possibly abused; but the workers are on their feet. What I fear more than their temporary disorder and partial competence is the incursion of bourgeois values, such as corrupted British labor.

Compare a company town like the American Smelting and Refining Company's "Avalo" refinery near Chihuahua with the autonomous oil refinery of Atzacopalco, and you will see the growth in dignity and order that full control of the C. T. M. brings. In the "Avalo" the order is dark and dead; a subtle humiliation inheres in the neat houses. Symbolically, the place is without trees, except for the walled inclosure where the foreign bosses live, their houses smothered in foliage. High up in the Sierra is the silver town of Santa Eulalia: dirty, noisy, chaotic, buried in the dust of the bad roads. The workers of "Avalo" must free themselves of an external oppression that has brought spiritual squalor; the workers of the mining town must find a discipline and method for the life within them. This, Lombardo's leadership offers. But it is not enough. It lacks sufficient place for the intuitive processes—not irrational but prerational—which gave birth to the Mexican revolution and whose neglect has given strength to all the counter-revolutions.

[*The concluding article of Mr. Frank's series on Mexico Today will appear in next week's issue.*]

Reclaiming the Dust Bowl

BY KUNIGUNDE DUNCAN

Wichita, Kansas, August 21

TO THE eternal drama of man's struggle with the elements the people of the American Dust Bowl are contributing a scene of victory. These farmers of the high plains have pitted brain and muscle against a six-year drought which was superinduced, meteorologists say, by the fact that the sun, an incalculably strong adversary 93,000,000 miles away, is a variable star. Cyclic drought caused by solar variability, as predicted and charted by Dr. Charles G. Abbott of the Smithsonian Institute, recurs at periods of eleven and a half, twenty-three, and forty-six years, the forty-sixth-year variation being of greatest intensity and longest duration. Fortunately, out of his recent experience in the Dust Bowl, the plainsman has forged weapons with which to conquer the next great drought, due in 1975 by Dr. Abbott's calculations.

The high plains have never had abundant rainfall. But when the annual precipitation of from fourteen to twenty inches decreased to from eight to fourteen, the situation became acute. "Dusters" began to boil up and shut out the sun, and everywhere the question was asked, "What shall we do?" It was a question that remained unanswered for many months while gas engines refused to run and locomotives crawled through a springless, viewless land —a land where people lived with windows weather-stripped tightly with adhesive tape to exclude the penetrating silt; where wet sheets were hung above beds and about the walls to save the lives of the old, the ill, and the new-born; where cattle that had escaped paralysis and death caused by eating drought-spoiled roughage were shipped to a distant grass and water supply or shot down; where paint was ground from wooden buildings by sand abrasion; where water from deep wells after standing an hour in stock tanks bore a blue, oily scum; where a weird purplish sun guided the funeral processions of those who had died of dust pneumonia.

The Dust Bowler, seeking a means of combating these terrible conditions, went first into causes and found that he was having to fight more than super-temperatures, water shortage, and constant wind-whipped dust. He was having to fight the mistakes of his predecessors. The financiers who had pushed the railroads across the prairies had rushed in settlers who, not content with good cow country, had set about growing the crops they were used to "back East" by methods used in abundant-rainfall climates. The cattlemen in the early days of a "free range" had overgrazed the prairies with their enormous herds, banked their piles, and left. The World War demand for bread and more bread had led men to plow under millions of acres of drought-resisting, soil-clamping buffalo grass and sow the land to wheat.

Study brought to light the startling fact that farmers all over the country, greedily cropping to the very brink of streams, had left loose soil to wash away during those months when no crop was growing and had thus lowered the water table in a much larger area than that actually suffering from blowing dust. Real-estate speculators who drained swamps thousands of miles from the Dust Bowl helped to make it. In Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, and the Dakotas the water table was found to have been lowered from eight to forty feet during the first twenty years of "settlement." The high plains suffered a greater drop. Where water had formerly been reached at 90 feet, it was found at 150. In New Mexico ancient Indian wells 250 feet deep went dry.

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There seemed to be but two solutions to the Dust Bowl problem: to make more rain fall, or to save every drop that did fall. Church people prayed. A faker raked in dishonest dollars for a while by foisting his battery-and-wire "sky squeezer" upon overcredulous communities. But no rain fell. Higher temperatures, higher winds, more suffocating "black blizzards" prevailed. Harassed on all sides, blamed by suitcase farmers as a "Sahara maker," obliged to exist somehow in his dust-ridden land, with grasshoppers stripping what few crops he could wrest from his blowing fields, this man of the plains, this fellow-of-the-furrow, kept both his head and his courage. Conservation alone remained. He called science to his aid. Meanwhile, he was able to exist with the help of emergency-relief, civil-works, agricultural-adjustment, and rural-rehabilitation agencies working in conjunction with the United States Department of Agriculture soil-conservation service, operating from the agricultural colleges of the states affected—Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. The state governments, too, made liberal money grants.

Yet money and man-power, tractors and food would have been helpless against the scourge had not an Oklahoma farmer, H. H. Finnell, been able to figure out the way to "stop rain in its tracks," as he put the problem. Impressed by prayers for rain at the church where his parents took him as a small boy, Finnell concluded that God was doing his part to make rain fall, but that man was remiss in not using his wits to save and store rain. He later developed the theory that even with the scant rainfall of his part of the world good crops could be grown if men knew how. Working on the experimental staff of Panhandle Agricultural and Mechanical College, he evolved and tested his now famous contour-terrace system of tillage, which has been the greatest single factor in Dust Bowl reclamation. Upon his appointment as Regional Soil Conservator in April, 1935, Finnell and a fellow-Panhandler, Bert W. McGinnis, tackled the titanic job of catching all the rain that should fall upon 227,000 square miles of floury, water-shedding silt, storing it in that soil, and making it produce food for man and beast.

Finnell preached two things: know how to save rain; know how to use it. Rain, to be saved, must be stored in the soil where it cannot evaporate. To make it sink into the soil, terrace and contour tillage can be depended upon for 100 per cent effectiveness. In contour plowing the deep, flat-bottomed furrows follow the contour of the land, as determined by expert engineering. Such a series of furrows will catch and hold, until it sinks in, any run-off from the land which lies between contours. If the land between the contour furrow lines is terraced, that is, made exactly level—another expert engineering job—it will absorb to capacity any rain that falls on it, especially if its surface has been deeply tilled. Where the incline of land is very steep, spillways at alternating ends of successive terraces will cause the unabsorbed water to descend by such a roundabout way that, as one worker explained, "it just gets disgusted and quits."

While some scientists studied South American fields which have been under cultivation by Inca Indians for five hundred years and others searched Turkestan for soil-retaining, drought-resisting plants, Finnell and McGinnis directed twenty-six "demonstration stations" at the worst points in the Dust Bowl. Four years ago these farms were tiny green islands in an ocean of dust. Today these islands are growing into green continents. This incredible feat could never have been accomplished had it not been for the high intelligence of the plainsmen and the giant strength of the tractor. When, after the first year, with the least rainfall yet, these demonstration farms produced crops superior to any grown in normal seasons, farmers stood in line to sign applications for the free services of engineer, surveyor, chemist, agronomist, forester, and range examiner.

When contouring and terracing were not feasible, other modes of reclamation were put into play: strip farming, building lakes and ponds, retiring tilled land to grass, utilizing stubble, using new varieties of crops and breeds of cattle, planting trees, and dozens of minor schemes. Strip farming is planting a variety of crops in strips in the same field, the strips being only a few yards in width. Kaffir, broom corn, and grama grass, which have soil-retaining roots, alternated with cotton and beans, which have loosely growing roots, interrupt the force of the wind against the soil and afford in some soils almost complete control of blowing dust. Ponds and lakes for flood prevention and watering stock are being constructed by the thousands. Sloughs are furnished at their heads with "water spreaders" and planted with tough shrubs and tenacious-rooted plants. Water holes on the ranges have been removed to new sites and additional ones made to permit the new system of rotated, deferred, and seasonal grazing which is giving the worn-out parts of the vast range lands a chance to recuperate. Drainage from uncontoured fields and pastures is being led back on to the fields instead of permitted to flow away and be wasted in highway drainage ditches.

The farmer has become grass-root conscious. The intensive survey which reclamation has entailed has brought out the fact that too large a percentage of the high plains —32,000,000 acres—has been under cultivation. Thousands and thousands of acres of this land are being returned to grass sod, sown to native varieties. Buffalo grass, the native, tenacious, drought-resistant ground cover, has such minute seeds that they must be winnowed by vacuum cleaner. The larger native grasses—blue stem, wild rye and millet, dropseed, and a dozen others—are being harvested and threshed by combine. Excess seed is stored for future use. Retiring cultivated land to grass

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means that cattle grazing is to regain something of its former importance. Farmers have learned to leave eighteen-inch-high stubble in the fields, never to burn off fields, never to till fields until just before seeding, and never to permit stock to feed so long in stubble that they destroy the vegetation and give the elements a chance to start a small duster from the trampled soil. Stubble has come into its own as a soil stabilizer when plowed under or left to stand and as a humus maker and moisture retainer when left in the soil.

Bumper crops grown under drought conditions with these new farming methods have stimulated experimentation. Clover and alfalfa, never before considered possible plains crops, are being grown profitably. Contouring has invaded even native grass pastures and ranges, for it can be depended upon to double and even triple the grass yield. Innovations in the way of cattle breeds—in the Indian country of New Mexico, for instance—are proving that smaller herds of better breeds can be as profitable as large herds of poor breeds while using half as much pasture land. With all these changes wild life is increasing. Wild turkeys, plover, quail, wild pigeons, prairie hens, even beaver and foxes are returning.

Aided by WPA and federal subsidy the Dust Bowl people have planted 50,000 seedling trees and are to plant millions more. The six to eight feet of height and branch-spread of the oldest of these trees, now four years old, promise much for the plainsmen of tomorrow. One day they will be pouring humidity into the dry air, adding humus to the soil, breaking the sweep of the incessant prairie winds, and making impossible a return of the "black blizzards."

Thus is man winning his fight against the variability of that mighty star, our sun; against the carelessness and greed of those who preceded him and of his fellows in other parts of the country. His success thus far has been significant enough to assure complete reclamation of the Dust Bowl. His tractor-fought battle has attracted agronomists from Australia and Canada, Palestine and China, South Africa and the Argentine. Meanwhile, in the areas where the dust is still blowing, notably, eastern Colorado, western Kansas, and eastern New Mexico, the battle still rages. Women still seal windows against dust, clean house with shovels, not brooms, protect babies with wet sheets, and endure a scourge more cruel than Indian raids, a scourge which can only be conquered by a courage and an endurance superior to that demanded of the early pioneers.

Astronomers who see Mars as a drying planet, who suggest that its lineal markings are irrigation canals, may be viewing the final scene of the drama of man's battle against the elements. The Earth is far from that stage. Our cyclic droughts are followed by periods of normal moisture. The annual rainfall in the Dust Bowl is on the increase; in places it is already normal or above normal.

In the Wind

WAR NEWS: The British *Sunday Pictorial* reports that the headmistress of the Beckenham County school has instructed her 450 female pupils to learn three funny stories "as an air-raid-precaution measure" and to keep them secret until war breaks out. The stories "must be of suitable character, easy to understand, and they must be funny," the headmistress explained; "the idea is to keep the girls in high spirits through an air raid." One pupil complained that she could hardly wait: "I have three beauties already."

WHEN KING ZOG, Albania's fallen ruler, arrived at Oslo recently with his queen, he found that accommodations had been reserved for them at the Rome Hotel. The King seemed not to enjoy the irony and insisted on waiting at the station until the plans were changed.

TRYING TO prove that party members weren't jarred by news of the German-Russian pact, the *Daily Worker* kept up a steady appearance of optimism in the ensuing days. Even the sports page inadvertently fell into line; it contained a three-column story under the headline: "Reds Not Jittery, Says McKechnie."

LATEST "UNDERGROUND ITALY" *bon mot,* relayed by the *Living Age:* "If we had half as much to eat as we have to swallow, we would lead a marvelous life."

DURING THE bitter fight over the President's lending bill, the Easton (Pa.) *Express* carried this headline: "Economy Bloc Chiefs Lash at Roosevelt." The continuation head was: "Economy Blocheads Lash at Roosevelt."

FROM THE radio page of the Hartford (Conn.) *Courant,* August 29: "7:30 and 9—MBS chain, Raymond Gram swing comment." . . . Picturesque headline in the Columbia (S. C.) *Star:* "Hitler Coils to Strike."

BECAUSE BRITISH libel laws are severe, journalists have developed a language designed to evade them. The most recent example, cited by the *New Statesman and Nation,* was a poster advertising an evening paper's scoop. The poster read: "Mystery Man's Alleged Statement."

FATHER COUGHLIN'S Christian Front is upset by the improved behavior of the New York police: it is reported that Front officials have now protested to the Civil Liberties Union that the police are "discriminating" against them. . . . Robert Dell's description of Anthony Eden in connection with his visit to the United States last winter: "The sweetest Tory ever sold." . . . S. J. Perelman's description of conservative Jews who try to hush-hush anti-Semitism: "The Talmud Tories."

[The $5 prize for the best item submitted during August goes to L. Robert Joseph of Hollywood for the item about the San Gabriel Bund published last week.]

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Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

SO WAR has come again, with all its horror and misery. We witness once more the breakdown of the theory that peace may be established or upheld by force. It seems as if that lesson ought to have been learned from the rise of the Germany of Hitler and the collapse of the Treaty of Versailles, with its complete demonstration of the futility of Wilson's proud assertion that German militarism was defeated for all time. Yet for four years now the so-called democracies have been engaged in a mad race against Italy and Germany to pile up enough armaments, call out enough soldiers, and construct enough airplanes to overawe the other fellow. Each side was certain that if it could only be strong enough to terrify the other side there would be no war. Military men the world over have declared—none more emphatically than our own—that if a country piled up arms enough nobody would dare attack it.

Now we see the inevitable outcome. We see the demonstration of the truth of Lord Baldwin's statement that if an armament race began again in Europe it would bring war and not peace. We see once more complete reliance on military force to solve the problems of nations and establish the perpetual peace for which all except the militarists and the Nazis long. Once more we shall be told that this is really the war to end war, and that if the Allies do not win it, democracy will be finished for all time, whereas if our friends win and properly make over Germany, the Kingdom of God will reign on earth. All this will greatly stir people, but it will be just as far from the truth as the similar slogans of 1914-18. The world will not be made over by force; nor will militarism be destroyed in this way; nor will Germany be purified of the unspeakable Nazis and their even more horrible doctrines. Salvation cannot come that way; it can only come with a general recognition that war must be done away with lest it do away with our modern civilization.

The unfortunate and discouraging thing about it all is that human beings will not learn. The surviving numbers of the three million Americans who were called on to fight for their country during the World War have forgotten the feeling of outrage with which they returned from France, realizing not only the horror but the futility of war, and have yielded to the renewed militaristic propaganda. They have again come to believe that the United States must squander boundless treasure upon preparations for war in order to keep a possible enemy from our shores, must so terrify him by piling up our might that he won't think of attempting to raid us. They will not be affected by the results abroad; they and many other deluded Americans will believe with our militarists that if England and France had only started their rearmament a few years earlier, Hitler would never have dared to attack. The folly of it screams to high heaven. Dictators are never awed by the amount of armament piled up by the other fellow. They are driven into war by the nature of their own government. When their economic situation becomes bad, they have to do something to distract the attention of the deluded people from what is happening at home. There must always be scapegoats, if not Jews and Communists and pacifists at home, then the nations which are trying to encircle the country. Against them the dictator gladly takes a chance to win all or lose all by one desperate throw of the dice, or else he imagines, like Louis Napoleon, that he can defeat the enemy even with smaller resources and a smaller army because of his greater cleverness and efficiency.

The outcome is now on the lap of the gods. It will be harder to know what is happening and where the truth lies than in the last war, for the censorship is bound to be more complete, more destructive of the truth. The practice of deceiving their own people and the world at large has been carried to greater lengths by the dictator states than ever before; it has become the normal course with them, not the abnormal. It will become the normal attitude of the democracies now that war is at hand. Hence it is the duty of all good Americans to take everything with a grain of salt and not to permit themselves to be stampeded by their natural desire to see England and France win. Of course we all want to see Germany defeated; on that issue the American people are united as never before, the only dissenters being the disloyal German-Americans of the Fritz Kuhn, German-American Bund type. But that does not mean that we should let ourselves be drawn into the struggle, that we should again become the catspaw of the Allies. If the war lasts long enough, we are only too likely, with the present President in the White House, to be drawn in again—perhaps by the lure of what Mr. Roosevelt has called "fool's gold." But if America keeps sane and really wishes to serve humanity and civilization, it will absolutely refuse to enter a European war again on any plea whatever.

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

Christian on the Left

THE CLUE TO HISTORY. By John MacMurray. Harper and Brothers. $2.50.

PROFESSOR MACMURRAY is one of the most able and most extreme of the left-wing Christians. He believes in God, in the Fall, in history as the gradual realization of God's will, in the teaching of Jesus as the essential clue to the understanding of that history, and in the Apocalypse, that is, the material coming out of the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth. And there his orthodoxy ends. He does not believe in theology, he does not believe in the churches, he accepts nearly the whole of Marx, and he regards science and communism as being the fullest manifestations of Christianity that have so far appeared.

Starting from the fact that Jesus was a Jew, he contrasts the Jewish consciousness with that of Greece and of Rome. While the Greek was contemplative and the Roman pragmatic, the Jew was religious, which Professor MacMurray defines as monist, that is, he preserved the unity of theory and practice. The Greek could think but not act, so that he was politically defeated by the Roman who could act but not think, so that he had to go on acting blindly till the empire which was the result broke down under its own weight.

Primitive Christianity was corrupted by both. The Greek influence made it other-worldly and spiritual; the Roman influence made it ethical, ascetic, and sad. Rome ruled this world; Greece imagined the next. The apocalyptic teaching of the Gospels was glossed over until restated by Marx. Only the consciousness which can overcome the Greek and Roman dualism, and see thought and action, mind and matter, as one, can enable man to understand the universe and himself and to achieve that freedom which is defined by Dante as "In his will is our peace," and by Engels as "consciousness of necessity." Real Christianity, the Jewish religious attitude fully developed by Jesus, is the leaven in history which has been the cause of all progress.

The teaching of Jesus may be summed up as follows: "I come to redeem man, that is to say, to lead him out of the determined life into the freedom which is consistent with his real nature. Freedom is only realized through right action. Right action is only made possible by correct knowledge. Fear prevents knowledge, for man can only know what he can love. But love can cast out fear, because it is the nature of man to love, not in the limited instinctive way of the animals, but intentionally. He can love all men, irrespective of race or class or character, not because he ought to but because he really wants to. In limiting his love he frustrates himself and produces the opposite effect to what he intended. Whoso saveth his life loseth it."

The second half of "The Clue to History" is a brilliant summary of the last two thousand years in Europe, in illustration of this last text. For instance, the Christian church was corrupted by the secular Roman will to world-power, and the result was the Reformation, the destruction of its own unity and the triumph of the secular, national, capitalist state. This, in its turn, creates against its will international finance and socialism. An intellectual social democracy which professes freedom and equality but has lost the emotional power to achieve them by action goes down before a blind fascism which can act but rejects freedom. The Jews who crucified Jesus for being a pacifist international are now persecuted by Hitler for polluting the Aryan race.

Stimulating and illuminating as he is, I cannot help feeling that his determination to believe in the existence of God leads Professor MacMurray into a kind of Hegelian attitude of "whatever is, is right." His history seems so determined to work out in the long run for the best, and everybody's individual intention is so consistently frustrated, that there seems little reason for doing anything in particular. After all, all study of history is being wise after the event, and I am not convinced that either Jesus or Marx or Professor MacMurray can predict the future with scientific certainty. Progress is probable but not certain. The probability can be increased, but only by conscious human action. Furthermore, belief in God as a conscious agent outside man seems contradictory to the rest of Professor MacMurray's position. He rejects theology as a product of dualist thinking; but so, too, surely, is the conception of God.

For me personally his argument would gain in consistency and sacrifice nothing if he said: "Man is aware that his actions do not express his real nature. God is a term for what he imagines that nature to be. Thus man is always making God in his own image. In so far as Jesus was the first person to make the image correspond to the fact, he revealed God to man. 'My Father worketh and I work,' refers to man and to man only. Neither the universe nor the animals work. 'My Father' is the real nature of man; 'I,' his conscious awareness of that nature. Again, in so far as, in Jesus, this awareness was complete, 'I' and 'my Father' are one. None cometh to the Father, save through me."

W. H. AUDEN

Five Decisions

DAYS BEFORE LENT. By Hamilton Basso. Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50.

IT IS hard to determine just what Mr. Basso is trying to prove in his present novel. Five men, of widely different temperaments and from widely different walks of life, find themselves in the days preceding the New Orleans Mardi Gras simultaneously obliged to make decisions which will alter the whole course of their lives. The greater part of the book is concerned with the crisis facing the hero, Dr. Jason Kent: shall he go to India and devote himself to scientific research, or shall he stay at home, marry the girl he loves, and become a small-town physician? In the end he decides on the latter course, and the reader is made to feel that it is

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the nobler course; that the "higher life of science" is distinctly inferior to the role of a back-street practitioner, assured of intimate contact with human suffering. So far as the reader is concerned, however, the moral implications of Dr. Kent's choice are invalidated by the decision arrived at by Father Victor Carducci, another of the five protagonists, in regard to a similar problem. Father Carducci wishes to start a producer cooperative among a group of New Orleans unemployed: but he knows that by doing so he risks the disfavor of his archbishop—for whom the whole project smacks of communism—and the possibility of excommunication. He decides, after a struggle, that it is nobler to forgo his plans for the immediate improvement of human conditions and remain in the church, meanwhile praying to God to enlighten the archbishop's soul.

By presenting such widely divergent solutions to problems which are very nearly the same, Mr. Basso may intend to suggest that each man seeks his own salvation in his own way; yet since he seems to approve as warmly of Father Carducci's decision, on its own merits, as he does of Dr. Kent's, this point is never sufficiently emphasized. The decisions reached by the other three characters in regard to their respective destinies have little bearing on these problems and little or no reference to each other. The ambiguity of the book's major thesis is balanced by the obvious mechanics of the plot, the triteness of the characterization, and a florid, overwritten style. "Days Before Lent" adds nothing to the reputation which Mr. Basso has earned by his previous novels.

HELEN NEVILLE

Memoirs of the Civil War

THE ROAD TO RICHMOND. By Major Abner R. Small, Sixteenth Maine Volunteers. University of California Press. $3.50.

I HAVE read hundreds of Civil War narratives, but never a more compact and truthful picture of what life was like in the Army of the Potomac than this posthumous one of Major Small's. If there are members of the oncoming generation who wish to know the history of that heroic army, which was butchered by its own generals far more than by its enemies, but never lost its dogged courage or its will to win, they will get the whole story in this little volume.

For Major Small was the typical volunteer officer from the North. Twenty-five years of age, without previous military experience, he was at Bull Run as a corporal in the Third Maine and then became adjutant of the Sixteenth. With that regiment his experiences were exactly like those of thousands of others. He rose by industry, courage, cheerfulness, and competence where many others were lazy and incompetent. He saw a regiment that was thrown into the army with practically no training, that was decimated by sickness and death, yet acquit itself superbly in its first hard battle. The "sick list was frightful" in the fall of 1862-63 because the regiment was for three months deprived of its overcoats, knapsacks, equipment, tents, everything except a blanket apiece, and campaigned thus in intense heat and in snow and cold—nobody forwarded the supplies it had left behind by order although they were never over seventy miles away!

Adjutant Small was captured in the Wilderness and experienced the usual horrors of Libby Prison, Salisbury, and Danville, to be exchanged finally, when scarcely able to stand, in time to command his regiment in the victory parade in Washington. The whole moving story is delightfully told, for the Major possessed a remarkable literary style. His comments on his superiors are most valuable because of his frankness and the clearness of his judgment, especially where efforts have been made to hide the truth. Thus, his characterization of General O. O. Howard, the religious first colonel of the Third Maine, is in line with Major General Carl Schurz's characterization of Howard as "a pious fraud" who was responsible for the disaster at Chancellorsville. Major Small testifies that the regiment Howard took to the front despised him; yet it is represented by some untruthful writers as being devoted to him. Howard posed all his life as the Christian soldier marching as to war.

Major Small's narrative has been splendidly edited by his son, Harold Adams Small, who put it together out of the manuscript beginnings of an autobiography and notations in a diary, which is also printed as an appendix. But the story is the Major's own. The appendices, with their full explanatory notes of persons, places, happenings, are the skilful and intelligent work of one who evidently knows the Civil War well.

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

ART

"LIFE IN AMERICA," the show at the Metropolitan Museum (until October 29) provides a feast of the country's past and at the same time a challenge to our interpretation of what that past has been. First come the portraits of early New Englanders. They are not all alike. Some, as presented by the strangely frivolous Blackburn, are as frilled and satiny as if they had just stepped out of the British court. Others, Benjamin West's for example, show only an academicism which had lived too long abroad. Our first interest does not go out to them, but rather to stiff and sincere works like little Robert Gibbs of the century before, which is as crude and serviceable as early American pewter. Hesselius too is wooden and terse and severe. Then there are the traveling "limners," such as Feke, literal perhaps and limited by their commissions, but capable of revealing passages, as in the self-portrait, which is surprisingly free for the period (1725). John Keteltas, by Mare, has this same uninterrupted sincerity, while the Roger Sherman, by Ralph Earl, reveals a peculiar, narrow, rigid power exactly reflective of its subject. All Earl's portraits, by the way, are equally chiseled and unyielding. This whole tradition of honest, if restricted, native portraiture culminated in John Singleton Copley. His starchy old ladies, his children, his more characterful gentlemen are treasurable yet.

In the Revolutionary period there was more mellowness. Here, of course, the best-known figure is Gilbert Stuart. He was at all times a sensitive craftsman. He never had an offending passage. Not searching perhaps, his granite Washington, legalistic Jay, and testy Justice Shippen nevertheless

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tell us in a kind of ordered prose what these eighteenth-century men were like. And in the porcelain-complexioned Mrs. John Quincy Adams and the sultry Mrs. Yates he has done something even better. More penetrating was Vanderlyn. His Aaron Burr is egoistic, high-strung, sensitive—an unforgettable portrait. A self-portrait, though glassier, is also impressive, while his landscape along the Hudson, painted at the age of twenty, shows that his gift was as great as his insight.

In the next period fluency increases. Sully does 6,000 canvases, among which his self-portrait and the Emerson are both well-modeled and telling in the traits which they emphasize. Inman's unbending Marshall and his agreeable picture of himself are also acceptable. In John Neagle's Gilbert Stuart we meet an immense, appetitive nose, a lively eye, and a general air of well-being: a man who had lived much and well. Then there are the portraits of Audubon—not to forget his turkey—all surprisingly good. Samuel F. B. Morse, before he became an inventor, displayed a good eye and a considerable warmth in such works as his DeWitt Clinton. And certainly the Cellist, by I. Bradley, is a brilliant piece of Americana, to say the least.

And now daily life becomes more important. Gentlemen were less numerous in the period of Jacksonian Democracy, and the boisterous energy of the people reflected itself in countless genre scenes, as indigenous as anything that had been done in America up to that time. Simple folk celebrate Fourth of July; horse-racing becomes more common. There are school scenes. Politics is discussed in an oyster-house. A whole series by Bingham is like pages from Twain. A good companion to Bingham—more lyrical—was W. S. Mount, with his Long Island scene, eel-spearing, thirsty drover, peddler, and horse traders.

Approaching the Civil War, we meet the politicos, Clay, Webster, Calhoun, all respectably presented. Then the noble Brown, stooping over to kiss a Negro child. Finally the war itself—with four clean-cut scenes by Conrad Wise Chapman, more ambitious but less successful battle panoramas, several generals, a good Lincoln, a better portrait of Brady, the Civil War photographer, and, of course, the sleepy Negro muleteers, the captured Confederates, and the army posts of Winslow Homer. A bit of poetry is furnished by Inness.

In the period following there is greater leisure. Eastman Johnson's numerous interiors have all the placidity and the curious unquestioning quality of the Victorian era. His Corn-husking and his clear, blue Maple-sugaring are even more successful. The other important recorder of this kind was John George Brown, with his happy rural episodes and sunny music lessons. There is a relaxed and charming self-portrait by LaFarge. But the great portrait is Eakin's Whitman—blithe, apple-cheeked, profoundly serene. His women seem constricted by comparison, but his sculling scenes and particularly his Rafting for Rail convince even as they describe. Homer is present in quantity too. Both men seem to be at home when they paint croquet games or red-wheeled four-in-hands. Indeed, until now almost all American painting had had a rural background, or, if not, only the more gracious aspects of cities were presented. No smokestacks appear. Brown alone, in Longshoremen's Noon Hour, painted workers. And even in the country, to judge from the ex-

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amples here present, no great song rose in the throat. Kensett's "slides" are pleasant, it is true, and the camp-meeting of Whittredge has some golden notes through the trees: but *réportage* on the one hand or restrained celebration on the other seemed to be in order.

There is evidence of a change in the last room. Sloan and Luks are both gay and protesting. They paint the slums, the wash-lines, the crowds. Of course Sargent is present with his polite ladies and gentlemen, and the "old maestro," Chase, is still showing us what he can do. But a questioning is taking place, and all the genuflections to Dewey, or Wilson, or the glowering Morgan can't conceal it. More of this social note would have strengthened the show—canvases, if they can be found, which would parallel the various works illustrated in Murrel's recent "History of American Graphic Humor." Moreover, the museum need not, as it did, disclaim the poetical as a reliable objective record. Doesn't George Fuller in his portraits say something about the physiognomy, as well as the soul, of New England? Is the life of Nantucket not in Ryder's canvases? Will the landscapes of Homer Martin, or Marsden Hartley, or Twachtman tell us nothing about American topography? Or Marin's water-colors about the skyscraper? The poet is a recorder just as much as the documenter. If the museum had recognized that, its show would be even more impressive than it is.

JEROME MELLQUIST

RECORDS

THE Indian themes from which MacDowell derived his "Indian Suite" he first altered in the direction of what is expressive and impressive and beautiful in European music, and then subjected to the harmonization and manipulation and structural organization of European music. The result—essentially a work in the European tradition written by an American—if not "one of the noblest compositions of modern times," as it seemed to Philip Hale, is one that uses attractive material effectively. Barlow and the Columbia Broadcasting Symphony do a good job with it for Columbia (four records, $6); but in accompanying Mitchel Miller's superb performance of the solo part of Handel's Concerto No. 3 for oboe and strings (one record, $1.50) they show the ineptitude they have shown before in performance of eighteenth-century music.

K. 387, the first of those six wonderful string quartets that Mozart dedicated to Haydn, is newly recorded for Columbia by the Roth Quartet (three records, $5). The performance is one of impeccable technical finish, but one that sounds as though it—and the music—had been devitalized by the care and caution with which this technical perfection was achieved.

Also, to Beecham's fairly recent set of Beethoven's Second Symphony Columbia adds a new one made by Weingartner with the London Symphony (four records, $6). The performance is effective in its characteristic directness, but Beecham's is more effective in the degree in which its phrasing is, characteristically, more sensitive and dynamic and colored more beautifully by the London Philharmonic. Using this orchestra Weingartner has made an excellent set (two records, $3.50) of Beethoven's Overture "Die Weihe des Hauses," a work written by a great composer, but not, to my ears, one of his great works. On the fourth side is the pathetic music for the death of Clärchen in "Egmont."

Both the Gigue from Bach's French Suite No. 5 and Myra Hess's arrangement of "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring"—which have been available in Miss Hess's melting performances on an old Columbia single—gain in strength by the simplicity of Gieseking's performances on a new record ($1). There is equally fine playing in his set (two records, $3.50) of Ravel's "Gaspard de la nuit," but also music on which this playing *is*—as far as I am concerned—wasted.

On a single record ($1) are Palestrina's beautiful "Super flumina Babylonis" and the even more impressive "Ave verum corpus" of Victoria. They are excellently sung by what is described as the male section of the choir of Westminster Abbey (I should have thought Westminster Cathedral); but someone more familiar than I with this type of music finds that it loses by being reduced to the range of a male choir without boys. On another single ($1) are four mildly charming songs by Fauré well sung by Georges Thill. And on still another ($1.50) is a fine performance by Ossy Renardy of a violin sonata by Giovanni Platti that can be neglected.

Basie's sparkling piano-playing and Lester Young's tenor saxophone solo against the distinctively sensitive background of the rhythm section, in the early portion of "You Can Depend on Me" (Decca), are the Basie Orchestra at its best; and in the first half of "How Long Blues" (Vocalion) there are Basie's playing again and the muted trumpet solo of Buck Clayton. "You're the Moment in My Life" (Vocalion) is a song that lends itself well to Mildred Bailey's style in phrasing, to which the Kirby Orchestra provides an admirably complementary style in support, with a beautifully contrived solo on muted trumpet by Shavers. He does not reach the same high level in Billie Holiday's "Them There Eyes" (Vocalion), which is nevertheless one of her better records, with a good solo on alto saxophone. Ella Fitzgerald is delightful when singing nonsense with a sort of agonized seriousness, which is what she does in "I Want the Waiter" (Decca). Teddy Wilson's first record with his own large band offers a beautiful tenor saxophone chorus (by Ben Webster?) in "The Man I Love" (Brunswick), and Wilson's tortuously arid piano-playing framed now in the red plush and gilt of the new band. "Jumpin' for Joy" on the reverse side has more spirit but remains undistinguished.

It seems incontestable that records do not wear down sapphire needles, of which there are now three on the market; but there is still the question of what the needles do to the records. It is a question that has been raised by the experiences of a few people, and that I have been waiting to see answered by the controlled experiments which one of these people, who is technically equipped for the purpose, agreed to make as soon as he could find the time. Until then I cannot say anything beyond what I said once before—that what little I know about the needles has left me unwilling to try them on my own records. As for quality of reproduction, someone with good judgment tells me that after a time he finds it a relief to go back to steel; but that again is something about which I cannot speak from personal experience.

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